

FAST FORWARD AND SKIP REMOTE CONTROL

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

This application claims the benefits of U.S. Patent Application Serial Number
5 60/491,462 filed July 30, 2003 and U.S. Patent Application Serial Number 60/535,190
filed January 6, 2004.

The present invention relates to an interface for a video device.

Many users have large libraries of video tapes upon which is stored desirable
video content. The user places the video tape within a video cassette recorder and presses
10 the play button on the video cassette recorder or an associated remote control. The user
then watches the video content. Normally while watching non-interesting portions of the
video or otherwise in an attempt to search for particular content on the cassette the user
may fast forward a portion of the video tape, such as double speed. Unfortunately,
having merely a single fast forward speed results in some difficulty for the user to
15 appropriately view the content as it passes by because it may be to fast or to slow for
proper viewing. In addition, having merely a single fast forward speed results in some
difficulty for the user to quickly move forward a substantial duration.

Another type of personal video recording device uses a digital recording medium,
such as a recordable digital video disc or hard drive, to record video content. The
20 personal video recorder is primarily used to record video broadcast or other available
video content for viewing at a different time. Typical personal video recorders include a
multitude of different buttons to fast forward, skip commercials, switch to recorded video
watching mode, and switch to television watching mode. In order to activate each of

these functions the user must examine his remote control and determine where the button is located for the particular function.

For example, a personal video recorder available from TiVO may include a single fast forward button that when depressed cycles from 2x speed, to 4x speed, to 8x speed,

- 5 as the button continues to be depressed. The user may then release the button while at the desired fast forward speed to maintain that fast forward speed. In this manner the user may selectively speed through a portion of the video content. Typically the user examines the remote control to locate the fast forward button. Also, the user typically examines the remote control to locate the appropriate button to return to normal viewing.

- 10 The TiVO personal video recorder may also include a jump commercial button. The jump button typically skips forward (“fast forwards”) in increments of approximately 30 seconds, which is the normal duration of a commercial. This is convenient for a user who does not like to watch commercials. Typically the user examines the remote control to locate the jump button. Also the user typically examines the remote control to locate
- 15 the appropriate button to return to normal viewing.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 illustrates a remote control with a fast forward and skip button.

- 20 FIG. 2 illustrates a fast forward and skip function.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

A single button on the remote control would be useful to achieve the fast forward features, the skip feature, and the return to typical viewing. This would provide easier control for the user and alleviate the need to search for various buttons on the remote control.

5 It has been determined that typical users of personal video recorders frequently desire to scroll through a video clip, or otherwise video content, at an increasing fast rate as the video is being fast forwarded through. Referring to FIG. 1, to facilitate this fast forwarding feature a single button may be provided on a remote control that has a multi-speed feature selectable by the duration that the button is pressed.

10 Pressing and holding the single button for a sufficient period of time, such as 1 second or more, results in the personal video recorder fast forwarding at a rate of 2x.

Continuing to press and hold the single button for an additional sufficient period of time, such as another second or more, results in the personal video recorder fast forwarding at a rate of 4x.

15 Continuing to press and hold the single button for an additional sufficient period of time, such as another second or more, results in the personal video recorder fast forwarding at a rate of 8x.

Continuing to press and hold the single button for an additional sufficient period of time, such as another second or more, results in the personal video recorder returning 20 to standard 1x playback.

In order to maintain the fast forwarding of the video content at the desired speed, the button may be released at any time during the current fast forward speed selection. For example, releasing the fast forward button while the fast forward mode is in 4x mode

results in the continuation of 4x mode. Other speeds and durations may likewise be used, as desired.

Pressing any other button returns the playback to the normal rate, such as 1x mode. Also, pressing the fast forward button for a limited duration may likewise return 5 the playback to the normal rate. As it may be observed, the use of a single fast forward button on the remote control permits the user to effectively achieve different fast forward rates, while still permitting the return to normal replay rates.

There are times that the user does not wish to fast forward through a portion of the video content, such as a video commercial, but would rather simply just skip the content 10 all together. In this case the user typically prefers to skip the commercial. However, in many cases the user would prefer to simply use the same button as the fast forward feature rather than have to learn the position of or otherwise fuss with additional buttons on a remote control. Also, if the user has to locate the skip button, which may take 2-3 seconds, then the skip of an additional 30 seconds may result in missing a portion of the 15 continuing program.

To simplify this inconvenience associated with multiple buttons on a remote control the same button may be used for both fast forwarding and skipping a portion of the video content. Normally the skip feature is something that is desirable to occur within a short duration and therefore should be a quick feature to select using the fast 20 forward button on the remote control. Accordingly, if the user presses the single button for a sufficiently short duration, such as less than 1 second, then the system will skip ahead 30 seconds (or other duration). The skip ahead feature may also be based upon video content, if desired.

The combination of the fast forward feature and the skip ahead feature using a single button on the remote control provides the functionality desired by the user in a simple and intuitive manner.